

NOTES FOR SPEAKERS

SEPTEMBER 18, 1943.

ISSUED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY, KING STREET, LONDON

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Speakers are asked to make the decisions of the T.U.C. known widely in the Labour movement, so that all sections and organisations can take the necessary action.

Points To Note

- (a) On all points affecting British home policy such as Essential Work Order, Beveridge Report, Education, Reconstruction) the T.U.C. took a good progressive standpoint.
- (b) On two questions affecting international policy (second front, international trade union unity) the T.U.C. did not face up to its responsibilities.
- (c) While the General Council agreed that trade unionists, the majority of whom are not experts on education or social insurance, should prod the Government on these matters, it would not agree that they should also prod the Government to carry out its declared pledge to open the second front. It should be pointed out, also, that Labour in the Government has the duty of co-operating for winning the war, and that co-operation does not mean capitulation to reactionary influences.
- (d) This year's T.U.C. represented

over 6 million workers, an increase of nearly 600,000 compared with last year.

The Decisions

We give here a summary. Full details were published in the *Daily Worker*, September 7-11, 1943.

- (a) *Essential Work Order*: To press Government to improve Order from point of view of workers, and to operate penalties for breach of regulations against employers with same firmness as against workers.
- (b) *War Production*: Amalgamated Engineering Union resolution calling for improved system of contract placing; enforcement of production committees; replacement of monopoly representatives on Controls by independent Chairmen, with equal numbers of employers, employees and consumers' representatives; more canteens, better transport, more nursery schools; shopping facilities, equal pay for equal work and promotion for women.
Referred to the General Council for fuller consideration.
- (c) *Educational Reconstruction*: Unanimous decision to press Government to speed-up proposals in White Paper, especially

with regard to school-leaving age, on which a definite date was demanded for raising the school-leaving age to 16.

The General Council maintained its view that Dual Control should be abolished, but considered it would be unwise to press the matter to the point of defeating the Bill.

- (d) *Trade Union Structure and Closer Unity*: Resolution calling for steps to end trade unions "overlapping" and competing with each other; amalgamations where desirable; structural and other changes to be made to improve trade union efficiency.

This resolution carried unanimously, whereas at last two Congresses it was defeated.

(Note point made by one speaker: there are 12 million workers outside trade unions who could be brought in if overlapping and competition were ended.)

- (e) *Beveridge Report*: T.U.C. welcomed Report, but deplored "hesitation" shown by Government, demanding legislation "immediately" to "give effect to the principles of the report with the minimum of delay."

- (f) *Post-war Britain*: General Council instructed to draw up plans for post war, dealing especially with such questions as control of industry, nationalisation, full employment.

- (g) *Trade Disputes Act*: Government censured for refusal to repeal clauses requested by T.U.C. Demand renewed unanimously that T.U.C. should pursue its present policy in the matter.

- (h) *Service Pay*: Demand for increased pay for servicemen and better allowances for their dependants.

- (i) *India*: Demand that Government should release all political prisoners, permit formation of Indian National Government elected on free vote, and grant full Dominion status to proposed new Indian Government.

- (j) *German People*: Congress heavily defeated "Vansittart" resolution moved by Mr. Charles Dukes of General and Municipal Workers' Union, placing blame for Hitlerism and war on entire German people. Congress made it clear that the Nazis were to blame and should be punished.

- (k) *Black Circular*: General Council agreed, under pressure, to relax the Black Circular, which prevented Communists from representing trade union branches on Trades Councils, and has undertaken to issue new model rules for Trades Councils.

- (l) *Trade Union Recognition*: Congress called for legislation compelling employers to recognise trade unions.

- (m) *Labour Research Department*: General Council agreed to remove ban on this organisation.

An Emergency Resolution, introduced by the General Council, covered:

- (n) *International Trade Union Unity*: Congress approved General Council recommendation to summon an international trade union conference as soon as conditions permit. It did not agree with proposal to extend the Anglo-Soviet Joint Trade Union

Committee by bringing in trade unions of other countries fighting fascism.

(o) *Second Front*: Resolution declared:

"Congress expresses its strong conviction that the expeditious development of effort to establish an additional front by further invasion of the European Continent should be taken at every point where the Allied forces can strike with good prospects of military success."

(Note: This resolution was carried after an amendment, calling for the second front this year, had been withdrawn because the impression was given that the second front had actually started.

Nevertheless, the resolution, as carried, is a step forward compared with last year's T.U.C. The whole atmosphere of the T.U.C., at which every mention of the second front was greeted with cheering, and at which Sir Walter's announcement of the "landing" caused an ovation, is an indication of how deeply trade unionists feel the urgency for Britain to strike the blow that can shorten the war.)

General Comments

1. The T.U.C. was a further big advance on the lines of last year's Congress.

2. Decisions taken, including that on the Second Front, give the working-class movement a basis for a united campaign to win the war rapidly, to secure speedy advances in social conditions and to establish the Trade Union move-

ment's prestige higher than ever before.

3. Throughout, the Congress was a powerful anti-Fascist demonstration.

4. There was a good feeling of internationalism and solidarity with the Soviet Union.

5. There was a general demand for unity.

6. While there was some apprehension concerning the difficulties and complexities of post-war problems, there was a great readiness shown for the Trade Unions to handle these matters.

What To Do

1. Report the T.U.C. widely.

2. Pass resolutions endorsing decisions, but also calling for speedy invasion of Western Europe.

3. Work out ways, in each locality, to put decisions, such as those on Beveridge Report, Education, etc., into practical effect, in terms of local campaigns, drawing in all sections of Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative movement.

4. See that Trade Union representatives on Trades Councils really fight for T.U.C. policy, and that they are people prepared to work for best interests of the movement.

5. See that your branch of the Union is affiliated to the Trades Council.

6. Campaign for 100 per cent payment of political levy to Labour Party.

7. Help to organise campaign to increase Union membership.

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